BABIES AND BIRDS.

WHAT do you think they are doing, these children?

Why, looking at the birds eating the crumbs that nurse has thrown out in the snow to them. It has snowed so heavily in the night that the children cannot have the window opened You see that it is quite blocked with snow. But the birds have got their crumbs all the same, and they are so grateful.

Listen: Mother is telling them a story of a little bird that she knew of. I can hear her, and if you listen very carefully, will hear her too.

"A short time ago, a little girl, called Beatrice, found a tiny swallow on the ground. It was in the Spring, when the baby swallows are too young to fly, for they have to learn to fly just as your baby sister learns to walk. This poor little swallow had tried to fly too soon, and so it had fallen down, and could not get back to its nest.

Beatrice was a very kind little girl, and when she saw the poor swallow lying on the ground, half dead with fright and weakness, she picked it up and kissed it. Then she carried it gently into the house and fed it, and made a little warm soft bed for it in a box.

She would not put it in a cage, for it is always cruel to cage a wild bird. And the little swallow grew bigger and stronger every day, and soon it learned to fly about the room. But one day, when Beatrice was out, some one came and opened the window, and away flew birdie, singing for joy at the fresh air and the bright sunshine.

When Beatrice came back and found him gone, she was nearly heart-broken, for she really loved the little swallow, and all day she grieved that her pet had gone, away—never to return—she thought. But as she was sitting by the window in the dusk of the warm summer evening, suddenly she felt a cool breath on her face, just as if some one was fanning her, and then she heard soft wings fluttering, and there was the little swallow flying round her head, just as he used to do.

You may think how eagerly she ran and fetched him bread; and ever since then he has come twice every day to get his food quite regularly, at exactly the same time, and Beatrice is very happy again."

That was such a pretty story that the children clapped their hands when it was done.

"We will give the birds bread every day," said Lionel, as he leaned his head on his hand, and looked out. "Then, perhaps, they will love us, and fly round our heads too."

Mrs. Oscar Wilde.